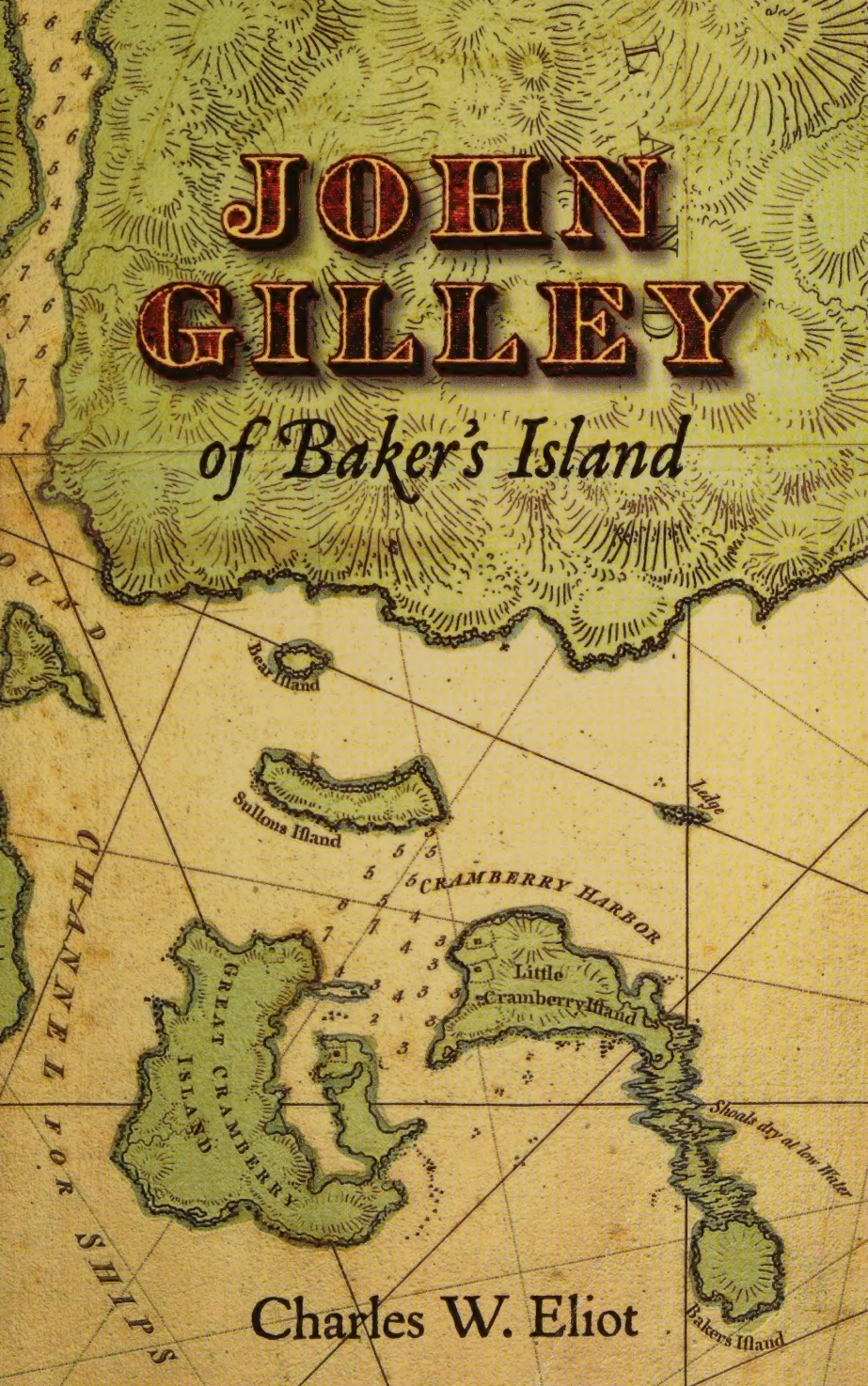
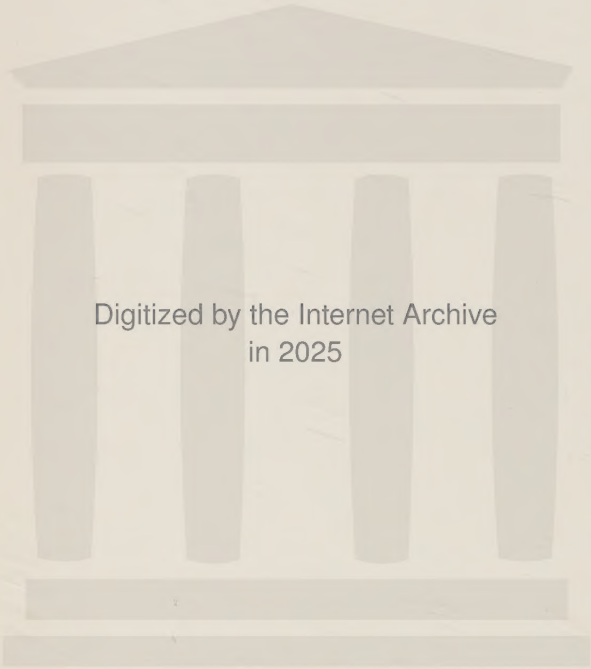

JOHN GILLEY
of Baker's Island
Bear Island
Sullons Island
Ledge
CRAMBERRY HARBOR
Little Cramberry Island
GREAT CRAMBERRY ISLAND
Shoals dry at low Water
Baker's Island
Charles W. Eliot



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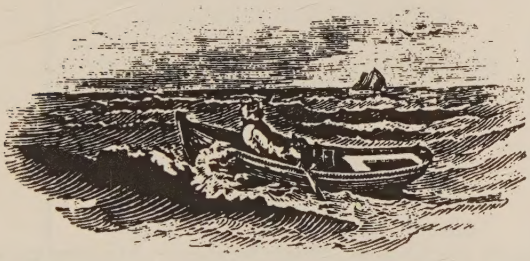
JOHN GILLEY

of Baker's Island



Charles W. Eliot

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TO THE BRAVE SETTLERS
WHO LEVELLED FORESTS
CLEARED FIELDS MADE PATHS
BY LAND AND WATER
AND
PLANTED COMMONWEALTHS

TO THE BRAVE WOMEN
WHO IN SOLITUDES
AMID STRANGE DANGERS
AND HEAVY TOIL
REARED FAMILIES
AND MADE HOMES

[FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE WATER GATE
AT THE WORLD'S FAIR, CHICAGO]

JOHN GILLEY

TO be absolutely forgotten in a few years is the common fate of mankind. Isaac Watts did not exaggerate when he wrote:

> Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
> Bears *all* its sons away:
> They fly forgotten, as a dream
> Dies at the opening day.

With the rarest exceptions, the death of each human individual is followed in a short time by complete oblivion, so far as living human memories are concerned. Even family recollection or tradition quickly becomes dim, and soon fades utterly away. Few of us have any clear

transmitted impression of our great-grandparents; some of us could not describe our grandparents. Even men accounted famous at their deaths slip from living memories and become mere shadows or word-pictures — shadows or pictures which too often distort or misrepresent the originals. Not one human being in ten million is really long remembered. For the mass of mankind absolute oblivion, like death, is sure. But what if it is? Should this indubitable fact affect injuriously the mortal life in this world of the ordinary human being? Not at all. For most men and women the enjoyments, interests, and duties of this world are just as real and absorbing, at the moment, as they would be if the enjoying,

interested, and dutiful individuals could imagine that they were long to be remembered on this earthly stage. A few unusually imaginative and ambitious persons are doubtless stimulated and supported by the hope of undying fame — a hope which in the immense majority of such cases proves to be a pure delusion. The fact is that forelooking is not a common occupation of the human mind. We all live, as a rule, in the present and the past, and take very little thought for the future. Now, in estimating the aggregate well-being and happiness of a community or a nation, it is obviously the condition of the obscure millions, who are sure to be absolutely forgotten, that it is most important to see and weigh

aright; yet history and biography alike neglect these humble, speechless multitudes, and modern fiction finds it profitable to portray the most squalid and vicious sides of the life of these millions rather than the best and the commonest. Thus the facts about the life of the common multitude go unobserved, or at least unrecorded, while fiction paints that life in false colors.

This little book describes with accuracy the actual life of one of the to-be-forgotten millions. Is this life a true American type? If it is, there is good hope for our country.

John Gilley was born February 22, 1822, at the Fish Point on Great Cranberry Island, Maine, whither his mother, who lived on Baker's

Island, had gone to be confined at the house of Mrs. Stanley, a midwife. Baker's Island lies nearly four miles from the island of Mount Desert. It is a roundish island, a little more than half a mile long from north to south, and a little less than half a mile wide from east to west. At low tide it is connected with another much larger island, called Little Cranberry, by a reef and bar about a mile long; but by half-tide this bar is entirely covered. Almost all the coasting vessels which come from the westward, bound to the Bay of Fundy or to the coast of Maine east of Frenchman's Bay, pass just outside of Baker's Island; and, as this island has some dangerous ledges near it, the

United States built a lighthouse on its highest part in the year 1828. The island has no good harbor; but in the summer small vessels find a safe anchorage on the north side of it, except in easterly storms. The whole shore of the island is bare rock, and the vegetation does not approach the ordinary level of high water, the storm-waves keeping the rocks bare far above and behind the smooth-water level of high tide. There are many days in every year when it is impossible to land on the island or to launch a boat from it. In the milder half of the year the island is of course a convenient stopping-place for offshore fishermen, for it is several miles nearer the fishing-grounds than the harbors of Mount

Desert proper. In the first years of this century the island was uninhabited, and was covered by a growth of good-sized trees, both evergreen and deciduous.

About the year 1812, William Gilley of Norwood's Cove, at the foot of Somes Sound on its west side, and Hannah Lurvey, his wife, decided to move on to Baker's Island with their three little children and all their goods. Up to that time he had got his living chiefly on fishing or coasting vessels; but, like most young men of the region, he was also something of a wood-cutter and farmer. He and his wife had already accumulated a little store of household goods and implements, and tools for fishing and farming. They

needed no money wherewith to buy Baker's Island. There it lay in the sea, unoccupied and unclaimed; and they simply took possession of it.

William Gilley was a large, strong man, six feet tall, and weighing over two hundred pounds. His father is said to have come from Great Britain at fourteen years of age. Hannah Gilley was a robust woman, who had lived in Newburyport and Byfield, Massachusetts, until she was thirteen years old, and had there had much better schooling than was to be had on the island of Mount Desert. She was able to teach all her children to read, write, and cipher; and all her life she valued good reading, and encouraged it in her family. Her father, Jacob

Lurvey, was born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and married Hannah Boynton of Byfield. The name Lurvey is a good transliteration of the German Loewe, which is a common name among German Jews; and there is a tradition in the Lurvey family that the first Lurvey, who emigrated to Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, was of Jewish descent and came from Archangel in Russia. It is noticeable that many of the Lurveys have Old Testament names, such as Reuben, Levi, Samuel, Isaac, and Jacob, and that their noses tend to be aquiline. This was the case with most of the children of William and Hannah Gilley. The father of Hannah served in the Revolutionary army as a boy.

He lived to the age of ninety-two, and had ten children and seventy-seven grandchildren. The Lurveys are therefore still numerous at South-West Harbor and the vicinity.

For William Gilley the enterprise of taking possession of Baker's Island involved much heavy labor, but few unaccustomed risks. For Hannah, his wife, it was different. She already had three little children, and she was going to face for herself and her family a formidable isolation which was absolute for considerable periods in the year. Moreover, she was going to take her share in the severe labors of a pioneering family. Even to get a footing on this wooded island — to land lumber, live stock, provisions, and the implements of

labor, and to build the first shelter — was no easy task. A small, rough beach of large stones was the only landing-place, and just above the bare rocks of the shore was the forest. However, health, strength, and fortitude were theirs; and in a few years they had established themselves on the island in considerable comfort. Nine more children were born to them there; so that they ultimately had a family of twelve children, of whom six were sons and six daughters. All these children grew to maturity. Fortunately, the eldest child was a girl, for it was the mother that most needed help. Three of the children are still (1899) living, two of them over eighty years of age and one over ninety. Nine of the

twelve children married, and to them were born fifty-eight children, of whom forty-five are still living.

John Gilley was the tenth child and also the youngest son, and when he was born the family had already been ten years on the island, and had transformed it into a tolerable farm. When he began to look about him, his father was keeping about six cows, a yoke of oxen, two or three young cattle, about fifty sheep, and three or four hogs. Several of the children were already contributing by their labor to the support of the family. The girls, by the time they were twelve years old, were real helpers for the mother. They tended the poultry, made butter, and spun wool. The boys naturally helped in

the work of the father. He, unaided except by his boys, had cleared a considerable portion of the island, burning up in so doing a fine growth of trees — spruce, fir, birch, and beech. With his oxen he had broken up the cleared land, hauled off part of the stones and piled them on the protruding ledges, and gradually made fields for grass and other crops. In the earlier years, before flour began to be cheap at the Mount Desert "stores," he had even raised a little wheat on the island; but the main crops besides hay were potatoes and other vegetables for the use of the family and cattle. The son is still living who carried a boat-load of wheat to Somesville, had it ground and sifted into three grades, and car-

ried all three back to the island for winter use. The potato-bug and potato-rot were then unknown, and the island yielded any wished-for amount of potatoes. The family often dug from two to three hundred bushels of potatoes in a season, and fed what they did not want to their cattle and hogs.

Food at the island was habitually abundant. It was no trouble to get lobsters. No traps were needed; they could be picked up in the shallow water along the rocky shore. Fresh fish were always to be easily procured, except in stormy weather and in cold and windy February and March. A lamb could be killed at any time in the summer. In the fall, in sorting the flock of sheep,

the family killed from ten to fifteen sheep; and what they could not use as fresh mutton they salted. Later in the season, when the weather turned cold, they killed a "beef-critter," and sometimes two when the family grew large. Part of this beef was salted, but part was kept frozen throughout the winter to be used fresh. Sea-birds added to their store of food. Shooting them made sport for the boys. Ducks and other sea-fowl were so abundant in the fall that the gunners had to throw away the bodies of the birds, after picking off all the feathers. The family never bought any salt pork, but every winter made a year's supply. Although codfish were easily accessible, the family made no use of salt

cod. They preferred mackerel, which were to be taken in the near waters in some month of every year. They had a few nets, but they also caught mackerel on the hook. During the summer and early autumn the family had plenty of fresh vegetables.

For clothing the family depended mostly on wool from their own sheep. They used very little cotton. There were spinning-wheels and looms in the house, and the mother both spun and wove. Flax they raised on the island, and from it made a coarse kind of linen, chiefly for towels. They did, however, buy a cotton warp, and filled it with wool, thus making a comfortable sort of sheet for winter use or light blanket for summer. The wool of at least fifty

sheep was used every year in the household, when the family had grown large. The children all went barefoot the greater part of the year; but in the winter they wore shoes or boots, the eldest brother having learned enough of the shoemaker's art to keep the family supplied with footwear in winter. At that time there were no such things as rubber boots, and the family did not expect to have dry feet.

Their uses for money were few; but some essentials to comfort they must procure at the store, seven miles away, at South-West Harbor, in return for money or its equivalent. Their available resources for procuring money were very much like those of similar families to-day in the same

neighborhood. They could sell or exchange butter and eggs at the store, and they could sell in Boston dried fish and feathers. One of John's elder brothers shot birds enough in a single year to yield over a hundredweight of feathers, worth fifty cents a pound in Boston. The family shipped their feathers to Boston every year by a coasting vessel; and this product represented men's labor, whereas the butter and eggs represented chiefly the women's labor. The butter was far the best of the cash resources; and so it remains to this day in these islands. It sold in the vicinity at twelve and a half cents a pound. There was one other source of money, namely, smoked herring. The herring which

abound in these waters had at that time no value for bait; but smoked herring could be sold in New York, which was the best market for them, at from seventy-five cents to one dollar and ten cents a box, each box holding half a bushel. The herring were caught, for the most part, in gill-nets; for there were then no weirs and no seines. The family had their own smoke-house, and made the boxes themselves from lumber which was sawed for them at the Somesville or the Duck Brook saw-mill. Each of these saw-mills was at least nine miles distant from Baker's Island; so that it was a serious undertaking, requiring favorable weather, to boat the lumber from the mill and land it safely at the rough home beach.

The family nailed the boxes together, out of the sawed lumber in the early fall, and packed them with the fragrant fish; and then some coasting vessel, usually a schooner owned in a neighboring island, carried the finished product to distant New York, and brought back, after a month or two, clear cash to pay for the winter's stores.

In this large and united family the boys stayed at home and worked for their parents until they were twenty-one years of age, and the girls stayed at home until they were married and had homes of their own or had come of age. All the boys and three of the girls were ultimately married. The three girls who did not marry went away from home to earn money

by household labor, factory work, nursing, or sewing. It was not all work for the children on the island, or, indeed, for the father and mother. In the long winter evenings they played checkers and fox and geese; and the mother read to the family until the children grew old enough to take their share in reading aloud. Out of doors they played ball, and in winter coasted on the snow. The boys, as soon as they were ten or twelve years of age, were in and out of boats much of the time, and so attained that quick, instinctive use of oar, sail, and tiller in which lies safety. When they grew older they had the sport of gunning, with the added interest of profit from the feathers. Their domestic animals

were a great interest as well as a great care. Then, they always had before them some of the most splendid aspects of nature. From their sea-girt dwelling they could see the entire hemisphere of the sky; and to the north lay the grand hills of Mount Desert, with outline clear and sharp when the northwest wind blew, but dim and soft when southerly winds prevailed. In every storm a magnificent surf dashed up on the rockbound isle. In winter the low sun made the sea toward the south a sheet of shimmering silver; and all the year an endless variety of colors, shades, and textures played over the surfaces of hills and sea. The delight in such visions is often but half conscious in persons who

have not the habit of reflection; but it is nevertheless a real source of happiness, which is soon missed when one brought up amid such pure and noble scenes is set down among the straitened, squalid, ugly sights of a city. On the whole, the survivors of that isolated family look back on their childhood as a happy one; and they feel a strong sense of obligation to the father and mother — particularly to the mother, because she was a person of excellent faculties and an intellectual outlook. Like most of her people for two generations, she was a member of the Congregational Church; and in the summer-time she took the eldest children nearly every Sunday in mild weather to the church at South-West

Harbor, going seven miles each way in an open boat. To be sure, the minister taught that hell was paved with infants' skulls, and descriptions of hell-fire and the undying worm formed an important part of every discourse. Some of the children supposed themselves to accept what they heard at church ; but the mother did not. She bought books and read for herself; and by the time she had borne half a dozen children she could no longer accept the old beliefs, and became a Universalist, to which more cheerful faith she adhered till her death.

It is obvious that this family on its island domain was much more self-contained and independent than any ordinary family is to-day, even

under similar circumstances. They got their fuel, food, and clothing as products of their own skill and labor, their supplies and resources being almost all derived from the sea and from their own fields and woods. In these days of one crop on a farm, one trade for a man, and factory labor for whole families, it is not probable that there exists a single American family which is so little dependent on exchange of products, or on supplies resulting from the labor of others, as was the family of William and Hannah Gilley from 1812 to 1842. It should also be observed that sea-shore people have a considerable advantage in bringing up boys, because boys who become good boatmen must have had an ad-

mirable training in alertness, prompt decision, resource in emergencies, and courageous steadiness in difficulties and dangers. The shore fisherman or lobsterman on the coast of Maine, often going miles to sea alone in a half-decked boat, is liable to all sorts of vexatious or formidable weather changes — in summer to fog, calms, and squalls, in winter to low-lying icy vapor, blinding snow, and the sudden northwester at zero, against which he must beat homeward with the flying spray freezing fast to hull, sails, and rigging. The youth who learns to wring safety and success out of such adverse conditions has been taught by these struggles with nature to be vigilant, patient, self-reliant, and

brave. In these temperate regions the adverse forces of nature are not, as they sometimes are in the tropics, irresistible and overwhelming. They can be resisted and overcome by man; and so they develop in successive generations some of the best human qualities.

It resulted from the principles in which the children had been brought up that no one of the boys began to save much of anything for himself until he was twenty-one years of age. It was therefore 1843 before John Gilley began to earn money on his own account. Good health, a strong body, skill as a sailor, and some knowledge of farming, stock-raising, and fishing, he had acquired. In what way should he now begin to

use these acquisitions for his own advantage? A fortunate change in his father's occupation fifteen years before probably facilitated John's entrance on a career of his own. William Gilley had been appointed light-keeper in 1828, with a compensation of three hundred and fifty dollars a year in money, the free occupation of a house, and all the sperm-oil he could use in his household. He held this place until the year 1849, when, on the coming into power of the Whig party, he was turned out and a Whig was appointed in his place. Perhaps in recognition of his long service, it was considerately suggested to him that he might retain his position if he should see fit to join the dominant party; but to this

overture he replied, with some expletives, that he would not change his political connection for all the lighthouses in the United States. Now, three hundred and fifty dollars a year in cash, besides house and light, was a fortune to any coast-of-Maine family seventy years ago, — indeed, it still is, — and William Gilley undoubtedly was able to lay up some portion of it, besides improving his buildings, live stock, boats, tools, and household furniture. From these savings the father was able to furnish a little money to start his sons each in his own career. This father was himself an irrepressible pioneer, always ready for a new enterprise. In 1837, long before he was turned out of the lighthouse, he

bought for three hundred dollars Great Duck Island, an uninhabited Island about five miles southwest of Baker's Island, and even more difficult of access, his project being to raise live stock there. Shortly after he ceased to be light-keeper, when he was about sixty-three years old, and his youngest children were grown up, he went to live on Great Duck, and there remained almost alone until he was nearly eighty years of age. His wife Hannah had become somewhat infirm, and was unable to do more than make him occasional visits on Duck Island. She died at sixty-nine, but he lived to be ninety-two. Each lived in their declining years with one of their married sons, Hannah on Little Cranberry and

William on Baker's. Such is the natural mode of taking care of old parents in a community where savings are necessarily small and only the able-bodied can really earn their livelihood.

John Gilley's first venture was the purchase of a part of a small coasting schooner called the *Preference*, which could carry about one hundred tons, and cost between eight and nine hundred dollars. He became responsible for one-third of her value, paying down one or two hundred dollars, which his father probably lent him. For the rest of the third he obtained credit for a short time from the seller of the vessel. The other two owners were men who belonged on Great Cran-

berry Island. The owners proceeded to use their purchase during all the mild weather — perhaps six months of each year — in carrying paving-stones to Boston. These stones, unlike the present rectangular granite blocks, were smooth cobble-stones picked up on the outside beaches of the neighboring islands. They of course were not found on any inland or smooth-water beaches, but only where heavy waves rolled the beach-stones up and down. The crew of the *Preference* must therefore anchor her off an exposed beach, and then, with a large dory, boat off to her the stones which they picked up by hand. This work was possible only during moderate weather. The stones must be of tolerably uniform

size, neither too large nor too small ; and each one had to be selected by the eye and picked up by the hand. When the dory was loaded, it had to be lifted off the beach by the men standing in the water, and rowed out to the vessel ; and there every single stone had to be picked up by hand and thrown on to the vessel. A hundred tons having been thus got aboard by sheer hard work of human muscle, the old craft, which was not too seaworthy, was sailed to Boston, to be discharged at what was then called the "Stone Wharf" in Charlestown. There the crew threw the stones out of her hold on to the wharf by hand. They therefore lifted and threw these hundred tons of stone three times at least before they were deposited on

the city's wharf. The cobblestones were the main freight of the vessel; but she also carried dried fish to Boston, and fetched back goods to the island stores of the vicinity. Some of the island people bought their flour, sugar, dry-goods, and other family stores in Boston through the captain of the schooner. John Gilley soon began to go as captain, being sometimes accompanied by the other owners and sometimes by men on wages. He was noted among his neighbors for the care and good judgment with which he executed their various commissions, and he knew himself to be trusted by them. This business he followed for several years, paid off his debt to the seller of the schooner, and began to lay up

money. It was an immense satisfaction to him to feel himself thus established in an honest business which he understood, and in which he was making his way. There are few solider satisfactions to be won in this world by anybody, in any condition of life. The scale of the business — large or small — makes little difference in the measure of content.

At that time — about 1843 to 1850 — there were very few guides to navigation between Mount Desert and Boston compared with the numerous marks that the government now maintains. Charts were lacking, and the government had issued no coast-pilot. Blount's "Coast-Pilot" was the only book in use among the coastwise navigators,

and its description of the coast of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts was very incomplete, though tolerably accurate in the few most important regions. It was often anxious business for the young owners of an old, uninsured vessel to encounter the various weather of the New England coast between the first of April and the first of December. Their all and sometimes their lives were at stake on their own prudence, knowledge, and skill. None of them had knowledge of navigation in. the technical sense; they were coasting sailors only, who found their way from point to point along the shore by practice, keen observation, and good memory for objects once seen and courses once safely

steered. The young man who can do this work successfully has some good grounds for self-respect. At this business John Gilley laid up several hundred dollars. In a few years he was able to sell the *Preference* and buy half of a much better vessel called the *Express*. She was larger, younger, and a better sailer, and cost her purchasers between fifteen and sixteen hundred dollars. He followed the same business in the *Express* for several years more, laying her up in the late autumn and fitting her out again every spring. The winters he generally spent with his father and mother, or with one of his married brothers; but even in such periods of comparative repose he kept busy, and was always trying

to make a little money. He was fond of gunning, and liked it all the better because it yielded feathers for sale. In December, 1853, he was staying with his brother Samuel Gilley on Little Cranberry Island, and gunning as usual; but his brother observed that he did not sell the feathers which he assiduously collected. That winter there was a schoolteacher from Sullivan on Little Cranberry, who seemed to be an intelligent and pleasing girl. He made no remarks on the subject to his brother; but that brother decided that John was looking for a wife — or, as this brother expressed it at the age of eighty-two, "John was thinking of looking out for the woman; he saved his feathers — and

actions speak louder than words." Moreover, he sold his vessel at Rockland, and found himself in possession of nine or ten hundred dollars in money, the product of patient industry, and not the result of drawing a prize or two in the fishing lottery. In the following spring he went with six or seven other men, in a low priced fishing-vessel of about thirty-five tons which his brother Samuel and he had bought, up the Bay of Fundy and to the banks between Mount Desert and Cape Sable, fishing for cod and haddock. Every fortnight or three weeks the brothers came home to land their fish and get supplies; but the schoolmistress had gone home to Sullivan. During that spring John Gilley crossed

more than once to Sutton's Island, an island about a mile long, which lies between the Cranberry Islands and the island of Mount Desert, with its long axis lying nearly east and west. On this island he bought, that season, a rough, neglected farm of about fifty acres, on which stood a house and barn. It was a great undertaking to put the buildings into habitable condition and clear up and improve the few arable fields. But John Gilley looked forward to the task with keen interest and a good hope, and he had the definite purpose of providing here a permanent home for himself and a wife.

When cold weather put an end to the fishing season, John Gilley, having provided all necessary articles for

his house, sailed over to Sullivan, distant about eighteen miles, in his fishing-vessel and brought back to the home on Sutton's Island Harriet Bickford Wilkinson, the schoolmistress from Sullivan. The grandfather of Harriet Wilkinson came to Sullivan from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1769, and her mother's family came from York, Maine. The marriage took place on December 25, 1854, when John was thirty-two and Harriet was twenty-five; and both entered with joy upon married life at their own island farm. She was a pretty woman, but delicate, belonging to a family which was thought to have a tendency to consumption. In the summer of 1855 he spent about half his time on

this same vessel which had brought home his wife, and made a fair profit on the fishing; and the next year he sometimes went on short trips of shore fishing, but that was the last of his going away from the farm. Whatever fishing he did afterward he did in an open boat not far from home, and he went coasting no more. A son was born to them, but lived only seven months; and soon the wife's health began to fail. A wife's sickness, in the vast majority of families, means first, the loss of her labor in the care and support of the household, and secondly, the necessity of hiring some woman to do the work which the wife cannot do. This necessity of hiring is a heavy burden in a family where little money

is earned, although there may be great comfort so far as food, fire, and clothing are concerned. His young wife continuing to grow worse, John Gilley tried all means that were possible to him to restore her health. He consulted the neighboring physicians, bought quantities of medicine in great variety, and tried in every way that love or duty could suggest to avert the threatening blow. It was all in vain. Harriet Gilley lived only two years and a half after her marriage, dying in June, 1857. At this period, his expenses being large, and his earning power reduced, John Gilley was forced to borrow a little money. The farm and the household equipment had absorbed his whole capital.

JOHN GILLEY

On April 27, 1857, there came from Sullivan, to take care of Harriet, Mary Jane Wilkinson, her cousin. This cousin was only twenty-one years of age; but her father was dead, and her mother had married again. She had helped her mother till she was almost twenty-one years of age, but now felt free. Until this cousin came, nieces and a sister of John Gilley had helped him to take care of his dying wife. The women relatives must always come to the aid of a family thus distressed. To help in taking care of the farm and in fishing, John Gilley habitually hired a man all through the season, and this season of 1857 the hired man was his wife's brother. When Harriet Gilley died, there

was still the utmost need of a woman on the farm; so Mary Jane Wilkinson stayed during the summer and through the next winter, and before the end of that winter she had promised to marry John Gilley. There were at that time eight houses on Sutton's Island, and more permanent residents than there are now. Mary Jane Wilkinson was fond of the care of animals and of farm duties in general. She found at the farm only twelve hens, a cow, and a calf, and she set to work at once to increase the quantity of live stock; but in April, 1858, she returned to her mother's house at West Goulds-boro', that she might prepare her wardrobe and some articles of household linen. When, later in the sea-

son, John Gilley came after Mary Jane Wilkinson at Jones's Cove, he had to transport to Sutton's Island, besides Mary Jane's personal possessions, a pair of young steers, a pig, and a cat. They were married at North-East Harbor by Squire Kimball, in the old tavern on the west side of the harbor, in July, 1858; and then these two set about improving their condition by unremitting industry and frugality, and an intelligent use of every resource the place afforded. The new wife gave her attention to the poultry and made butter whenever the milk could not be sold as such. The price of butter had greatly improved since John Gilley was a boy on Baker's Island. It could now be sold at from twenty

to twenty-five cents a pound. In summer Squire Kimball, at the tavern, bought their milk. All summer eggs could be sold at the stores on the neighboring islands; but in the fall it was necessary to send them to Boston. During the fishing season the husband frequently went for fish in an open boat with one sail; but he no longer absented himself from home for weeks at a time. His labor on the farm was incessant. On the crest of the island a small field had been cleared by the former occupant of the house. With the help of a yoke of oxen John Gilley proceeded to add to this field on the east and on the west. The piles of stones which he heaped up on the bare ledges remain

to this day to testify to his industry. One of them is twenty-four feet long, fifteen feet wide, and five feet high. In after years he was proud of these piles, regarding them as monuments to his patient industry and perseverance in the redemption, or rather creation, of this precious mowing-field.

In these labors three or four years passed away, when the Civil War broke out, and soon, linseed-oil becoming scarce, porgy-oil attained an unheard of value. Fortunately for the New England shore people, the porgies arrived in shoals on the coast in every season for rather more than ten years. At various places along the shore from Long Island Sound to the Bay of Fundy, large factories

were built for expressing the oil from these fish; but this was an industry which could also be well conducted on a small scale with a few nets, a big kettle, and a screw-press worked by hand. For an enterprising and energetic man here was a new chance of getting profit from the sea. Accordingly, John Gilley, like thousands of other fishermen along the New England coast, set up a small porgy-oil factory, and during the porgy season this was his most profitable form of industry. During the last part of the war porgy-oil sold at a dollar or even a dollar and ten cents a gallon. The chum, or refuse from the press, was a valuable element in manure. All of John Gilley's porgy-chum went to enrich

his precious fields. We may be sure that this well-used opportunity gave him great satisfaction.

The farm, like most farms on the Maine shore, not sufficing for the comfortable support of his family, John Gilley was always looking for another industry by which he could add to his annual income. He found such an industry in the manufacture of smoked herring. This was at that time practised in two ways among the island people. Fresh herring were caught near home, and were immediately corned and smoked; and salted herring brought from the Magdalen Islands were bought by the vessel-load, soaked in fresh water to remove a part of the salt, and then smoked. John Gilley built a large

smoke-house on his shore close to a safe and convenient anchorage, and there pursued the herring business in both forms, whenever supplies of herring could be obtained. This is an industry in which women can bear a part. They can pull out the gills and string the wet fish on the sticks by which they are hung up in the smoke-house; and they can pack the dried fish into the boxes in which they are marketed. So the wife and the eldest daughter, as time went on, took a hand in this herring work. The sawed lumber for the boxes was all brought from the saw-mill at the head of Somes Sound, eight miles away. The men did that transportation, and nailed the boxes together. It was characteristic of John Gilley

that he always took pains to have his things better than anybody else's. He was careful and particular about all his work, and thoroughly believed in the good results of this painstaking care. He was always confident that his milk, butter, eggs, fowls, porgy-oil, and herring were better than the common, and were worth a higher price; and he could often induce purchasers to think so, too.

Of the second marriage there came three girls, who all grew to maturity, and two of whom were married in due season; but when John Gilley was seventy-four years old he had but two grandchildren, of whom the elder was only eight years old, his fate in this respect being far less fortunate than that of his father. Late

marriage caused him to miss some of the most exquisite of natural human delights. He could not witness the coming of grandchildren to maturity. He had the natural, animal fondness — so to speak — for children, the economic liking for them as helpers, and the real love for them as affectionate comrades and friends.

The daughters were disposed to help in the support of the family and the care of the farm. The eldest went through the whole course of the Normal School at Castine, and became a teacher. The youngest was best at household and farm work, having her father's head for business. The other daughter was married early, but had already gone from her father's house to Little Cranberry

Island as a helper in the family of the principal storekeeper on that island. Since the household needed the assistance of another male, it was their custom to hire a well-grown boy or a man during the better part of the year, the wages for such services being not more than from fifteen to twenty dollars a month in addition to board and lodging.

Although the island lay much nearer to the shores of Mount Desert than Baker's Island did, the family had hardly more intercourse with the main island than William Gilley's family on Baker's Island had had a generation before. They found their pleasures chiefly at home. In the winter evenings they read aloud to one another, thus carrying down

to another generation the habit which Hannah Lurvey Gilley had established in her family. The same good habit has been transmitted to the family of one of John Gilley's married daughters, where it is now in force.

In the early autumn of 1874 a serious disaster befell this industrious and thriving family. One evening Mr. and Mrs. Gilley were walking along the southern shore of the island toward a neighbor's house, when John suggested that it was time for Mary Jane to get the supper, and for him to attend to the fire in the smoke-house, which was full of herring hung up to smoke, and also contained on the floor a large quantity of packed herring, the fruit of the

entire summer's work on herring. The smoke-house was large, and at one end there stood a carpenter's bench with a good many tools. It was also used as a place of storage for rigging, anchors, blocks, and other seamen's gear. Mrs. Gilley went home and made ready the supper. John Gilley arranged the fire as usual in the smoke-house, and went up to the house from the shore. As the family were sitting at supper, a neighbor, who had been calling there and had gone out, rushed back, exclaiming, "Your smoke-house is all afire!" So indeed it was; and in a few minutes John Gilley's chief investment and all his summer's work went up in flames. The whole family ran to the scene, but it was

too late to do more than save the fish-house which stood near. John opened the door of the smoke-house and succeeded in rescuing a pair of oiled trousers and his precious compass, which stood on a shelf by the door. Everything else was burned up clean. John said but little at the moment, and looked calmly on at the quick destruction ; but when he went to bed that night, he broke down and bewailed his loss with tears and sobs. He had lost not only a sum of money which was large for him, — perhaps five hundred dollars, — but, what was more, he had lost an object of interest and affection, and a means of livelihood which represented years of patient labor. It was as if a mill-owner had lost his

mill without insurance, or the owner of a noble vessel had seen her go down within sight of home. This was the only time in all their married life that his wife ever saw him overcome by such emotion. In consequence of this disaster, it was necessary for John Gilley, in order to buy stores enough for the ensuing winter, to sell part of the live stock off his farm. This fact shows how close may be the margin of livelihood for a family on the New England coast which really owns a good deal of property and is justly held by its neighbors to be well off. If the cash proceeds of a season's work are lost or destroyed, extraordinary and undesirable means have to be taken to carry over the family to

another season. This may happen to a healthy, industrious, frugal household. Much worse, of course, may happen in consequence of sudden disaster in an unthrifty or sickly family. The investments of poor men are apt to be very hazardous. They put their all into farming-tools or live stock; they risk everything they have on an old vessel or on a single crop, and therefore on the weather of a single season; with their small savings they build a barn or a smoke-house, which may be reduced to ashes with all its contents in fifteen minutes. Insurance they can seldom afford. If the investments of the rich were as hazardous as are those of the poor, theirs would be a lot even more worrisome than it is now.

The smoke-house was never rebuilt. At first the money to rebuild was lacking, and later a new prospect opened before the family. After the fire John Gilley went more into cows and less into fat oxen. Hitherto he had always kept a good yoke of oxen and some steers, and he had been accustomed to do their hauling and plowing for all the families on the island. Thereafter he generally had as many as five cows, but often only a single young ox to do the hauling for the island. He always trained his oxen himself, and had pleasure in the company of these patient and serviceable creatures.

In 1880 the Gilleys on Sutton's Island heard that three "Westerners," or "rusticators," had bought land at

North-East Harbor. One was said to be a bishop, another the president of a college, and the third and earliest buyer a landscape-gardener — whatever that might be. It was even reported that one of these pioneers had landed on the western end of Sutton's Island and walked the length of the island. The news was intensely interesting to all the inhabitants. They had heard of the fabulous prices of land at Bar Harbor, and their imaginations began to play over their own pastures and wood-lots. John Gilley went steadily on his laborious and thrifty way. He served the town in various capacities, such as selectman and collector of taxes. He was one of the school committee for several years, and later

one of the board of health. He was also road surveyor on the island — there being but one road, and that grass-grown. As a town officer John Gilley exhibited the same uprightness and frugality which he showed in all his private dealings. To be chosen to responsible office by his fellow-townsmen, every one of whom knew him personally, was to him a source of rational gratification; and in each of his offices he had occasion to enlarge his knowledge and to undertake new responsibilities.

In 1884 the extreme western point of Sutton's Island was sold to a "Westerner," a professor in Harvard College, and shortly after a second sale in the same neighborhood was effected; but it was not

until 1886 that John Gilley made his first sale of land for summering purposes. In the next year he made another sale, and in 1894 a third. The prices he obtained, though moderate compared with the prices charged at Bar Harbor or North-East Harbor, were forty or fifty times any price which had ever been put on his farm by the acre. Being thus provided with what was for him a considerable amount of ready money, he did what all his like do when they come into possession of ready money — he first gave himself and his family the pleasure of enlarging and improving his house and other buildings, and then lent the balance on small mortgages on village real estate. Suddenly he became a

prosperous man, at ease, and a leader in his world. Up to this time he had merely earned a comfortable livelihood by means of diversified industry; since his second marriage now he had a secured capital in addition to his farm and its buildings. Now, at last, he was highly content, but nevertheless ready as ever for new undertakings. His mind was active, and his eye and hand were steady.

When three cottages had stood for several years on the eastern fore-side of North-East Harbor, — the nearest point of the shore of Mount Desert to Sutton's Island, — John Gilley, at the age of seventy-one, undertook to deliver at these houses milk, eggs, and fresh vegetables every day, and chickens and fowls when

they were wanted. This undertaking involved his rowing in all weathers nearly two miles from his cove to the landings of these houses, and back again, across bay waters which are protected indeed from the heavy ocean swells, but are still able to produce what the natives call "a big chop." Every morning he arrived with the utmost punctuality, in rain or shine, calm or blow, and alone, unless it blew heavily from the north-west (a head wind from Sutton's), or his little grandson — his mate, as he called the boy — wanted to accompany him on a fine, still morning. Soon he extended his trips to the western side of North-East Harbor, where he found a much larger market for his goods than he had found thirty-

five years before, when he first delivered milk at Squire Kimball's tavern. This business involved what was new work for John Gilley, namely, the raising of fresh vegetables in much larger variety and quantity than he was accustomed to. He entered on this new work with interest and intelligence, but was of course sometimes defeated in his plans by wet weather in spring, a drought in summer, or by the worms and insects which unexpectedly attacked his crops. On the whole he was decidedly successful in this enterprise undertaken at seventy-one. Those who bought of him liked to deal with him, and he found in the business fresh interest and pleasure. Not many men take up a new out-

of-door business at seventy, and carry it on successfully by their own brains and muscles. It was one of the sources of his satisfaction that he thus supplied the two daughters who still lived at his house with a profitable outlet for their energies. One of these — the school-teacher — was an excellent laundress, and the other was devoted to the work of the house and the farm, and was helpful in her father's new business. John Gilley transported the washes from North-East Harbor and back again in his rowboat, and under the new conditions of the place washing and ironing proved to be more profitable than school-keeping.

In the fall of 1896 the family which had occupied that summer one

of the houses John Gilley was in the habit of supplying with milk, eggs, and vegetables, and which had a young child dependent on the milk, lingered after the other summer households had departed. He consented to continue his daily trips a few days into October that the child's milk might not be changed, although it was perfectly clear that his labor could not be adequately recompensed. On the last morning but one that he was to come across from the island to the harbor a strong northeast wind was blowing, and some sea was running through the deep passage between Sutton's Island and Bear Island, which he had to cross on his way to and fro. He took with him in his boat the young man who had

been working for him on the farm the few weeks past. They delivered the milk, crossed to the western side of North-East Harbor, did some errands, there, and started cheerfully for home, as John Gilley had done from that shore hundreds of times before. The boy rowed from a seat near the bow, and the old man sat on the thwart near the stern, facing the bow, and pushing his oars from him. They had no thought of danger; but to ease the rowing they kept to windward under Bear Island, and then pushed across the deep channel, south by west, for the western point of Sutton's Island. They were more than half-way across when, through some inattention or lack of skill on the part of the young man in the

bow, a sea higher or swifter than the rest threw a good deal of water into the boat. John Gilley immediately began to bail, and told the rower to keep her head to the waves. The overweighted boat was less manageable than before, and in a moment another roller turned her completely over. Both men clung to the boat and climbed on to her botton. She drifted away before the wind and sea toward South-West Harbor. The oversetting of the boat had been seen from both Bear Island and Sutton's Island; but it was nearly three quarters of an hour before the rescuers could reach the floating boat, and then the young man, though unconscious, was still clinging to the boat's keel, but the old man, chilled

by the cold water and stunned by the waves which beat about his head, had lost his hold and sunk into the sea. In half an hour John Gilley had passed from a hearty and successful old age in this world, full of its legitimate interests and satisfactions, into the voiceless mystery of death. No trace of his body was ever found. It disappeared into the waters on which he had played and worked as boy and man all his long and fortunate life. He left his family well provided for, and full of gratitude and praise for his honorable career and his sterling character.

This is the life of one of the forgotten millions. It contains no material for distinction, fame, or long remembrance; but it does contain

the material and present the scene for a normal human development through mingled joy and sorrow, labor and rest, adversity and success, and through the tender loves of childhood, maturity, and age. We cannot but believe that it is just for countless quiet, simple lives like this that God made and upholds this earth.

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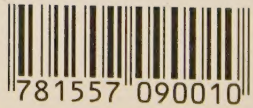

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